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TWO NEW RACES OF BIRDS FROM THE UPPER MAGDALENA  
VALLEY OF COLOMBIA

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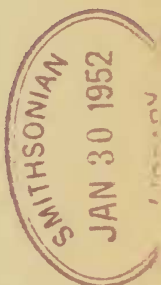
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Further field work in the arid upper Magdalena Valley of Colombia has augmented the collection of birds from that area reported on earlier (Miller, Auk, 64:351-381, 1947) and has made it possible to clear up the racial taxonomy of several forms. Two additional species are shown to have endemic races in this valley which merit description at this time.

*Tiaris bicolor* is a species of grassquit that occurs chiefly in the West Indies and on the Caribbean shore of South America. But it also extends south in Colombia along the Magdalena River valley where Stone (Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., 1899: 307) recorded it from Ibaguè and Chapman (Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., 36:560-561, 1917) reported it from Honda and Chicoral. The last station and Villavieja, whence I have obtained specimens, lie in the arid basin proper, whereas Honda is in a narrow part of the valley farther north where conditions are less notably arid. It is not unexpected, therefore, that these southernmost examples of the species show a paler gray green coloration than samples from more moist climatic regions. Some aspects of this color difference may be what led Chapman to comment on a degree of resemblance of his specimens to *Tiaris bicolor marchii* while nevertheless classifying them as *T. b. omissa*.

Males of this species show age variation in the development of the black face, throat and breast. Often accompanying the extension of the black in adults the green of the back and sides becomes darker or sootier. Evidently there also is geographic variation in the maximum extent of black attained. However difficult to evaluate this may be at some points in the range of the species, there is the possibility of comparing males with similar development of black and noting the differences in grays and greens of the other parts of the plumage, differences that are evidently geographic.

After reviewing all the material of the species in the Ameri-



Q 1952

can Museum of Natural History, I am in agreement with Hellmayr (Cat. Birds Amer., pt. 11:125, 1938) that birds of Porto Rico, the Lesser Antilles, Tobago, and Venezuela are inseparable and should all be grouped as *T. b. omissa* (type locality Tobago). There is a faint indication of a lighter colored and grayer abdominal area in the birds from Grenada and St. Vincent which Noble described as *T. b. inexpectata* but there is not enough difference to warrant separation. The contrast with typical *omissa* is not nearly as great as that of the birds of the upper Magdalena basin.

In pallor of flanks, the Magdalena birds equal *tortugensis*, the pale extreme of the species; *tortugensis* is even grayer and lighter on the back, however. *Sharpei* from the islands of Aruba, Curaçao and Bonaire is like the Magdalena birds dorsally but is not as light gray on the flanks and belly. Intervening between these insular forms, *tortugensis* and *sharpei*, is of course the coastal population of *omissa* in Venezuela. I have seen only two examples of *omissa* from Colombia apart from those of the upper Magdalena and Bogotá regions. These are from "Jimenez, W. Colombia" [=Jemenez in Valle?] and are dark gray and normal for that race. Evidently the upper Magdalena birds are related to the adjoining *omissa* and merely parallel in certain respects *tortugensis* and *sharpei*. They are not like *marchii*, as now understood, which has a sharply defined and anteriorly restricted black area in all mature males and darker and greener flanks and yellower belly. *T. b. johnstonei* and *T. b. bicolor* are forms with more extremely black males and do not at all closely resemble Colombian material, nor does the large *T. b. grandior*.

The birds of the upper Magdalena Valley may therefore be named

***Tiaris bicolor huilae* new subspecies**

*Type*.—Adult male, no. 120685 Mus. Vert. Zool., taken 5 kilometers north of Villavieja, 1400 feet, Huila, Colombia, on February 27, 1949, by A. H. Miller; weight 12.7 gm., testis 3 mm. long, original no. 7333.

*Diagnosis*.—Differs from *T. b. omissa*, its only adjacent geographic relative, in much lighter gray flanks of males, with less greenish admixture; back almost always lighter, more grayish green in males of comparable development of black

breast. Females paler and grayer green on flanks than in *omissa*. Size similar.

*Range*.—Tropical Zone of upper Magdalena Valley in states of Tolima and Huila, Colombia.

*Specimens of T. b. huilae examined*.—Ten. Huila (Mus. Vert. Zool.): Villavieja (1 ad. ♂); 5 km. N Villavieja (2 ad. ♂♂, 1 im. but black ♂, 1 im. ♂, 1 im. ♀). Tolima (Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.): Chicoral (2 black ♂♂; Honda 1 black ♂, 1 ♀).

The birds from Honda and Chicoral are not as extreme in their gray coloration as those from Huila. One from each of these more northern stations is somewhat intermediate toward *omissa*. In addition to the specimens of known locality are 6 Bogotá skins examined at the American Museum, one of which, number 515260, equals *huilae* in pallor and probably came from the upper Magdalena Valley. Three of the others are dark *omissa* and presumably came from north or east of Bogotá.

Grassquits were evidently breeding in the vicinity of Villavieja in January, February and March, as all black males taken had testes 3 to 7 mm. in length and some were singing. They occurred in open thorn scrub where there was some grass intermixed, chiefly on mesas away from the river bottom.

Zimmer (Amer. Mus. Novit. No. 1428:53-59, 1949) has recently reviewed the Buff-tailed Warblers, *Basileuterus fulvicauda*, of Colombia. He pointed out that two races are recognizable, *semicervinus* and *fulvicauda*, the former with greatly reduced dark areas on the outermost rectrices and more contrasting, though narrower, dark band on the remaining rectrices and darker coloration generally on the body compared with the latter. Birds from east of the eastern Andes are *fulvicauda*; those west of this range are *semicervinus* with more extreme development of dark coloration on the West Coast. He also comments (p. 55) on a specimen from Tolima, as follows: "A single example from Chicoral . . . is at the lightest extreme [of *semicervinus*] and in addition has the under parts as pale as many *fulvicauda*, to which form the specimen has previously been assigned. The tail . . . shows the characteristic markings of *semicervinus*, and unless a new form is to be established for the eastern population [of *semicervinus*] assign-

ment to *semicervinus* is indicated. The Chicoral bird may be but an exceptionally pale example of the population resident in the area, and I am unwilling to attempt a description of a possible new form hereabouts on the basis of 'Bogotá skins' or without a series from the upper Magdalena.' Chapman (*op. cit.*: 553) also noted the paleness of the Chicoral bird and thought it might be new.

Two specimens of Buff-tailed Warbler taken near Coyaima, Tolima, about 60 kilometers southwest of Chicoral, increase the significance of the Chicoral specimen (no. 113263 Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.) and substantiate its differences. Thus the Chicoral bird is seen not to be "an exceptionally pale individual" for its population because it is matched, or indeed is exceeded, in this regard by an adult male in fresh plumage from this second locality. Apparently birds of the upper Magdalena Valley show the extreme aspects of tail pattern of *semicervinus* but have developed a paler whiter under surface than either *semicervinus* or *fulvicauda* and are as light dorsally as *fulvicauda*. The Chicoral bird and the Coyaima adult have been directly compared with good series of the adjoining races at the American Museum and are found to contrast consistently with them in the combination of tail pattern and body coloration. The second specimen from Coyaima, a juvenile, has tail pattern and tail color identical with the adults. Accordingly, there now seems to be grounds for naming the form of this warbler from the upper Magdalena basin. It may be known as

***Basileuterus fulvicauda motacilla* new subspecies**

*Type*.—Adult male, no. 120648 Mus. Vert. Zool., taken 14 kilometers west of Coyaima, 1500 feet, Tolima Colombia, on January 28, 1949, by A. H. Miller; testis 5 mm. long, original no. 7038.

*Diagnosis*.—Similar to *B. f. semicervinus*, and identical with it in tail pattern, but lighter green dorsally and underparts less ochraceous, much more whitish; light areas of tail paler, more yellow. Similar to *B. f. fulvicauda* but tail with outer rectrices lacking dark bands or large spots and underparts whiter.

*Range*.—Tropical Zone of upper Magdalena Valley in states of Tolima and Huila, Colombia.

*Specimens of B. f. motacilla examined*.—Tolima: Chicoral

(1); 14 km. W Coyaima (1 ad. ♂, 1 jv. ♂). Also seen near the town of Colombia, 2500 feet, Huila.

Buff-tailed Warblers in the Magdalena basin were seen only in vegetation bordering streams or ditches where they stayed within a few feet of the ground, chiefly in the shadows. They continually move the tail or the entire hind quarters as do wagtails and water-thrushes. The consequent movement of the light tawny tail patch makes a spectacular signal which can be seen in the shadows when the bird otherwise is scarcely discernible. This apparent use of the tail marking for recognition or attracting attention suggests the possibility that there may be important differences in behavior in the related form *Basileuterus rivularis* which lacks the light tail patch. This consideration makes me reluctant to follow Zimmer's suggestion (*op. cit.*: 57) that *rivularis* and *fulvicauda* are conspecific until intergradation is clearly demonstrated.

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